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## ***A New Image of Women's Freedom Interpretation and Discourse of Female Labour in the Austro-Hungarian Feminist Press<sup>1</sup>***

### **Abstract**

Among Hungarian historians the subject-matter of female labour has gradually become a popular topic. The research work can be placed to the borderline of two disciplines: female history and history of journalism in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. With the application of news analysis, discourse analysis and text linguistics, the study intend to prove that women's movements at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century considered the safeguarding of female workers' interests as essential as the fight for women's enfranchisement. The author analyses the views, opinions mediated by the Austro-Hungarian feminist periodical press – *The Woman and The Society (A Nő és a Társadalom)* and *New Woman's Life (Neues Frauenleben)* – about female labour and the working conditions of working women between 1907 and 1913.

**Keywords:** discourse and news analysis, key words, Austro-Hungarian feminist press, female labour, white-collar work, industry, tertiary sector, exploitation

Besides the American and Western European scholars, the majority of today's Hungarian social researchers take it into consideration that in the shaping of history not only males but also females played a significant role. Among Hungarian research workers dealing with women's history, the subject-matter of female labour has gradually become a popular topic – next to the evolution of the institutional education of women and to the fight for the female suffrage. As the structures of female labour during the Dualistic Era have already been studied by certain historians, in this study I will make an attempt to discuss this issue from a new perspective.<sup>2</sup> I will analyse the views and opinions mediated by the Austro-

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<sup>1</sup> This research was supported by the European Union and the State of Hungary, co-financed by the European Social Fund in the framework of TÁMOP-4.2.4.A/ 2-11/1-2012-0001 'National Excellence Program'.

<sup>2</sup> However these works do not discuss comprehensively the history of female labour during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they are only short articles and chapters of books. E.g.: NAGY, Mariann: *Nők a magyar gazdaságban a dualizmus korában. (Women in the Hungarian Economy during the Dualistic Era.)* IN: GYÁNI Gábor–SÉLLEI Nóra (Eds.): *Nők a modernizálódó magyar társadalomban. Csokonai Kiadó, Debrecen, 2006. 205-223.*; NAGY, Beáta: *Nők keresőtevékenysége Budapesten a 20. század első felében. (Wage-earning Activities of Women during the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.)* IN: HADAS Miklós (Ed.): *Férfiuralom. Írások nőkről, férfiakról, feminizmusról. Replika Kör, Budapest, 1994. 155-175.*; BURUCS, Kornélia: *Nők az egyesületekben. (Women in the Associations.)*, História. XV. (1993):2. 15-19.; KERESZTY, Orsolya: *Bédy-Schwimmer Rózsa A Nő és a Társadalom szerkesztője. (Rosika Schwimmer, Editor of The Woman and the Society.)* IN: PALASIK Mária és SIPOS Balázs (Eds.): *Házastárs? Munkatárs? Vetélytárs? A női szerepek változása a 20. századi Magyarországon. Napvilág Kiadó, Budapest, 2005. 186-194.*; KERESZTY, Orsolya: *Nők változó társadalmi szerepei a dualizmus kori Magyarországon. (Changing Social Roles of Women in Hungary during the Dualistic Era.)* IN: PSENÁKOVÁ Ildikó–MEZŐ Ferenc–VICZAYOVÁ Ildikó (Eds.): *Teória a Prax II. Nitra, 2009. 77-88.*; KERESZTY, Orsolya: *Egy folyóirat a művelődésért: A Nő és*

Hungarian feminist periodical press about female labour and about the working conditions of working women before the outbreak of the First World War. I study the articles published in *The Woman and The Society* (*A Nő és a Társadalom*) and by the *New Woman's Life* (*Neues Frauenleben*).<sup>3</sup>

This research work can be placed to the borderline of two disciplines: female history and history of journalism in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. With the application of news analysis, discourse analysis and text linguistics, I intend to prove that women's movements at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century considered the safeguarding of the female workers' interests as important as the fight for women's enfranchisement.<sup>4</sup> In the study, by means of quantitative and qualitative tools, I will analyse the articles published in the above-mentioned periodicals dealing with the situation of female labourers. I will also highlight certain professions which appeared the most frequently in the periodicals.

Due to the above listed aims, it is inevitable to investigate the discourse connected to the writings. Thus, I will demonstrate the constantly recurring content elements – i.e. key words – referring to the journalists' similar ideological attitudes within the texts of the articles.<sup>5</sup> Concerning language usage, I will also take account of the permanent attributes and to references which can be considered as commonplaces.

### **Methodology**

Beyond the critical interpretation of the sources, I intended to create a more comprehensive viewpoint-system. In this study, I do not have an opportunity to analyse each article reporting on females' wage-earning activity, but I aim to draw

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*a Társadalom indulása és működésének első évei (1907–1910). (A Journal for Education. The Launching and the Operation of the Woman and the Society (1907–1910). IN: KOZMA Tamás–PERJÉES István (Eds.): Új Kutatások a Neveléstudományokban. Budapest, 2011. 290–304. KÉRI, Katalin: Hölgyek napernyővel. Nők a dualizmus-kori Magyarországon. 1867–1914. (Ladies with Parasols. Women in Hungary during the Dualistic Era. 1867–1914.) Pro Pannonia Könyvek, Pécs, 2008.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Woman and the Society* was the official organ of the Hungarian Feminists' Association (Feministák Egyesülete) and the National Federation of Women Clerks (Nőtisztviselők Országos Egyesülete). Its editor was Róza Bedy-Schwimmer, the leading figure of the Hungarian feminist movement before 1914. The periodical appeared once a month in Budapest between 1907 and 1913. *The New Woman's Life* was published as the journal of General Austrian Women's Association (Allgemeiner Österreichischer Frauenverein) between 1902 and 1918. Similarly to the Hungarian paper, it was a monthly journal, launched in Vienna with the assistance of Auguste Fickert, who had also been the president of the General Austrian Women's Association. In the footnotes of this study I will refer to *The Woman and the Society* as WS and to the *New Woman's Life* as NWL.

<sup>4</sup> When discussing the emancipation movement of women, we always emphasize the importance of females' enfranchisement. However, we often tend to forget about the crucial fact that suffrage has to be considered 'only' as a tool in women's hands with which they became able to get political rights but also to improve several other aspects of their lives. DELAP, Lucy–DICENZO, Maria–RYAN, Leyla (Eds.): *Feminism and the Periodical Press. 1900–1918*. Routledge, New York, 2006. 27.

<sup>5</sup> The word *ideology* means idea and standpoint in the journalistic jargon. Instead of *ideology* Teun van Dijk prefers the usage of *belief system* because it is more demonstrative. DIJK, van Teun: *Opinions and Ideologies in the Press*. IN: BELL, Allen–GARRETT, Peter (Eds.): *Approaches to Media Discourse*. Oxford, Blackwell, 1998. 21–64.; BELL, Allen: *The Language of News Media*. Blackwell, Oxford, 1991. 212.

the possibly most comprehensive picture about the two journals' interpretation of women's work.<sup>6</sup> Altogether, I have examined 485 articles appearing in 56 issues of the two periodicals, 28–28 issues from both journals. With a method, which is widely-used in the journalistic practice, I make an attempt to accomplish the analysis of the content of the articles. By discovering and analysing certain analogies in terms of their subject-matters, my primary aim is to point out the fact that the large-scale employment of women labourers lead to far-reaching consequences within the macro- as well as the micro-layers of the society.

### **Key Words**

By choosing certain words from newspaper articles, the content of the article can be easily reconstructed. On the one hand, application of the adequate words is absolutely necessary to the success of the article.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, phrases and expressions of critical importance highly contribute to how the readers' opinion is formed about a piece of writing. After having read an article, readers remember the names of elite people, politicians etc. In case of this topic, names of the leaders connected to the above-mentioned female associations, certain wage-earning activities and small details of the shared geographical and statistical data were certainly memorized by the readership. With the help of these terms i.e. key words readers are able to reconstruct the essence of the story.

Journalistic jargon entitles words and phrases of essential importance key words.<sup>8</sup> The comprehension of these domineering expressions within the text is fundamental and it also has to be emphasized that they play a crucial role in activating frames in the readers' minds. Frames are individual and according to Charles Fillmore they are „*detailed knowledge structures or schemas emerging from everyday experiences*”.<sup>9</sup>

These small text-organizing building blocks are inevitable to create the coherence within a piece of writing.<sup>10</sup> Although, their number within the text of a single article

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<sup>6</sup> Both journals appeared once a month between January of 1907 and December of 1913. This means that during this period both periodicals had 84 issues.

<sup>7</sup> MCKANE, Anna: *News Writing*. Sage Publication, London, 2006. 94.

<sup>8</sup> Variant layers of key words can be distinguished in the newspaper articles. From the aspect of the readers, certain key words are considerably more important than others. Without noticing or understanding them, the reader may get confused and the article may remain unfocused for them. There are other collocations which are less significant but certain readers consider them relevant. These words may be diverse depending on the personal interest of the people. ANDOR, József: *A kulcsszavakról. (About the Key Words.)* IN: SEBESTYÉN József–SURÁNYI Zsuzsa (Eds.): *A nyelv, az irodalom és a kultúra varázsa*. Pannon Egyetemi Kiadó, Veszprém, 2009. 23–28.

<sup>9</sup> EVANS, J. Richard: *The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840–1920*. Routledge, New York, 2006. 166.

<sup>10</sup> Despite of this fact, the opinions and views of linguists is not homogeneous in connection with the criteria on the bases of which key words might be identified within the text. Raymond Williams – the creator of cultural studies – emphasize the cultural embeddedness of key words. According to him, simple but compact words, which are well-known by everyone, are the main carriers of the text's content. WILLIAMS, Raymond: *Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Revised Edition, Fontana, London, 1983. 7–10.

is relatively low, with their application, journalists are highly able to influence the opinion of the readers. Although journalism – having been constantly adapted itself to the demands of the readership – is always changing, key words can be find and observed even in those periodicals which had been published 100 years ago.<sup>11</sup> At the beginning of my research work, I intended to choose only the most important text-organizing key word from the articles. Though, this endeavour would have been less effective in case of the longer and more compact pieces of writings.<sup>12</sup> From these articles, I often had to highlight two or three and sometimes four or five key words. The chosen key words were the following expressions: employment exchange, intellectual work, economy, factory work, exploitation of female workers, artistic professions, female clerks, protection of female workers, extraordinary professions, organisation, service sector and scientific work.

*Figure 1: Distribution of Articles Published in The Woman and the Society and in the New Woman's Life according to their Subject-matters*

Subject-matter	Number of the Articles	
	The Woman and the Society	New Woman's Life
<i>Employment exchange</i>	7	4
<i>Intellectual Work</i>	61	82
<i>Economy</i>	14	5
<i>Factory Work</i>	13	5
<i>Exploitation of Female Workers</i>	20	9
<i>Artistic Professions</i>	20	24
<i>Female Clerks</i>	43	24
<i>Protection of Female Workers</i>	36	65
<i>Extraordinary Professions</i>	6	5
<i>Organization</i>	22	59
<i>Service Sector</i>	18	15
<i>Scientific Work</i>	22	14
<b>Altogether</b>	<b>282<sup>13</sup></b>	<b>311<sup>14</sup></b>

<sup>11</sup> Key words affect the structure of the whole newspaper article and structure of the single paragraphs as well. ANDOR 2009. 27.

<sup>12</sup> E.g.: WS (1909): 4. 61; WS (1912): 5. 86-87; NWL (1912): 1. 18; NWL (1910): 2. 60.

<sup>13</sup> This number is higher than the number of the analysed articles (241), because 37 writings was categorised into more subject-categories.

<sup>14</sup> This number is higher than the number of the analysed articles (244), because 67 writings was categorised into more subject-categories.

As I have already referred to it, the frames of this study do not make it possible to analyse the subject-matters one by one. As a result of this, I grouped them into three comprehensive categories. In the first one, I will introduce the writings dealing with intellectual, academic and artistic professions which became opened in front of women during the examined period. In the second subsection, I will elude to articles dealing with the female labourers employed in factories, in the

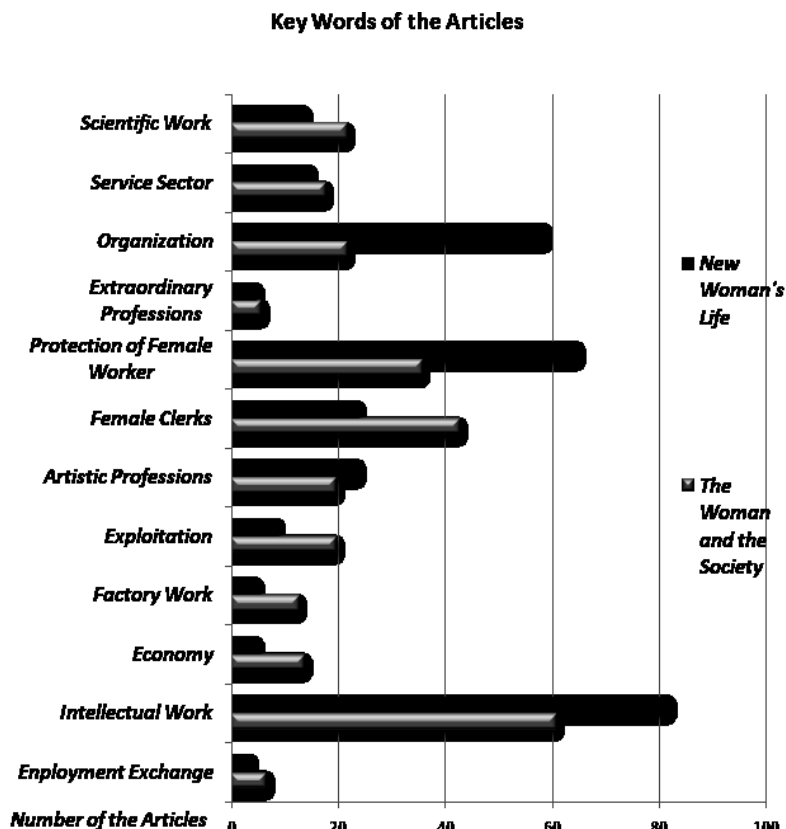


Figure 2: The Appearance of Certain Subject-matters in the Two Journals (Key Words)

agriculture as well as in the tertiary sector of the economy. Besides this, I will discuss the working conditions and the exploitation of female clerks. Finally, I will study those writings which report on the activities of females' associations.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> I considered it logical to survey the articles according to the above-mentioned logical order as females' associations attempted to serve with possible solutions in order to solve the problems of

### ***Women holding intellectual, academic, artistic and other extraordinary professions***

„In my interpretation, freedom was embodied by work, more specifically by paying labour. It also meant the independence from the family home. And this proved to be the only pathway towards my femininity.” These lines about the wage-earning activity of women were written by Maria Grey – English teacher and female author – as she had been thinking about this issue during her student-years.<sup>16</sup> However, it also has to be clearly stated that the separation from the family and the lack of the parents’ or the husbands’ financial background proved to be remarkably difficult and often lead to the identity-crisis of women.<sup>17</sup>

The organization of feminists’ movements in the United States and in Western Europe started in the 1850s. This was the beginning of the period when the activists of the suffragette movement continued more and more determined agitation in order to gain equal rights with their male counterparts. As a result of this, young girls living in the economically and socially more developed regions got the opportunity to go on to higher education i.e. graduate from secondary school and to opt for university.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, American, English – and in many cases also French – women were able to fill in jobs, which had been unimaginable for the Hungarians before the 1900s. Therefore, it has to be clearly emphasized at this point of the study, that the fight of the western countries’ feminist movements provided a highly positive example for the Austro-Hungarian females’ associations.

So that the Hungarian and Austrian women public opinion would be able to hear about the job opportunities of foreign ladies, both *The Woman and the*

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women labourers working in every sector of the economy.

<sup>16</sup> PEDERSEN, Joyce Senders: *Victorian Feminism and the Idea of Work*. IN: COWMAN, Krista-JACKSON, Louise A. (Eds.): *Women and Work Culture*. Britain c. 1850–1950. Ashgate, London, 2005. 27–47.

<sup>17</sup> The biography of Franziska zu Reventlow indicates not only to this kind of identity-crisis but also the complex problems which went along with the emancipation of the „weaker gender” (GNÜG, Hiltrud: *Erotisch-emanzipatorische Entwürfe Schriftstellerinnen um die Jahrhundertwende*. IN: GNÜG, Hiltrud-MÖHRMANN, Renate (Eds.): *Frauen – Literatur – Geschichte. Schreibende Frauen vom Mittelalter bis zum Gegenwart*. J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart, 1999. 260–280). Franziska zu Reventlow (1871–1918) was born as Countess Wilhelmine Sophie Auguste Adrienne but escaped from her home due to her constant fight with her family. She left for Munich where she started her writing and painting career became an activist of the German women’s movement. KUBITSCHKE, Brigitta-REVENTLOW, Franziska: *Gräfin zu Reventlow: Leben, Werk; eine Auswahl zentraler Texte von und über Franziska Gräfin zu Reventlow*. Institut für interdisziplinäre Forschung und Fortbildung der Universität Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, 1994. 1998.; FINGER, Anke: *Sentiment Media – Franziska zu Reventlow and the Genre of Modernism*. The German Quarterly. (2005): Summer. 2005. 320–336.

<sup>18</sup> SCHWARZ Leonard: *Professions, Elites and Universities in England*. IN: HOPPIT, Julian (Ed.): *The Historical Journal*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004. 941–962.; SULLEROT, Evelyne: *La presse féminine*. Armand Colin, Paris, 1963. 127–128. In the Emma Willard Secondary School (New York), girls had been educated as early as from the 1860s on the bases of the boys’ high schools’ curriculum. TURBIN, Carole: *Reconceptualising Family, Work and Labour Organizing: Working Women in Troy, 1860–1890*. IN: COTT, Nancy (Ed.): *History of Women in the United States. The Intersection of Work and Family Life*. Saur, München, 1992. 367.

*Society and the New Woman's Life* published several articles in connection with this topic. With this practice, the editors surely intended to establish positive and exemplary patterns for the Austro-Hungarian readership, while they also wanted to support them to profit by their talent and knowledge – similarly to the western ladies – in various intellectual professions. This might be the reason for the fact that the Hungarian periodical released altogether 109 shorter and longer articles on women's intellectual, scientific and artistic activities.<sup>19</sup> It can be stated as a general characteristic feature that women living in the Western European countries were able to choose from far more professions than females originating from Central or Eastern Europe. Due to this, articles, which had reported on certain extraordinary professions of women, were ranked into this category as well.

Based on the previously-mentioned data, the fact according to which the majority of the articles dealing with female labour (95) had arrived from the most prosperous western regions cannot be considered as surprising. Right after the start of the publication of *The Women and the Society*, readers were informed about the good news that a German author – Marie Louise Becker – had been chosen as a permanent member of the art society called *Union Internationale des Beaux Arts et Lettres*.<sup>20</sup> It was also good news that the number of women who worked as lawyers in the French capital city had been grown to four.<sup>21</sup> The success of women artists was also welcomed in the news section of the journal: related to Denmark, it turned out that „the first prize of the scholarship, which had been announced for the preparation of the horse statue of Christian IX was won by Maria Nielsen”,<sup>22</sup> while the German Helene Sternsdorff was chosen to the church organ player of Solingen.<sup>23</sup>

The official organ of the Hungarian women's movement made positive declarations about the Austrian white-collar workers, who had been working chiefly in Vienna. Besides the foundation of a female trade-school, which was directed by Olga Steindler,<sup>24</sup> the editors covered the pioneering advancement

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<sup>19</sup> This is 45,23% – i.e. almost one half – of the revised 241 articles. Though, it is important to emphasize that several writings were categorised into more than one subject-category.

<sup>20</sup> The subscribers of the journal had been informed about this piece of information within the frames of a gloss that mocked about the Hungarian situation. The writer of this article made a picturesque compare and contrast between the Hungarian and the French relations. With regard to our home country, it became clear that „due to the lack of space, in the year of 1907, the National Hungarian Royal School of Drawings only accepts the applications of boys in a limited number, while it rejects the application of girl-students at all.” WS (1907): 2. 22.

<sup>21</sup> WS (1907): 2. 27. It is worth comparing this report article of Rosa Feigenbaum which was shared in a 1912 issue of the journal. According to her demonstration, the number of female lawyers in Paris had been grown to 25, while their total number in the country had increased to be 50 during the preceding years. NWL (1912): 10. 261-264.

<sup>22</sup> WS (1908): 5. 85.

<sup>23</sup> WS (1911): 11. 98.

<sup>24</sup> At the same time of the praising of the Austrian circumstances, the author of this article made fun of the Hungarian situation, and tried to call the attention of the public to the backwardness of the country: „In a few years' time, merchants, who are in a close contact with the commerce of the Austrian capital will praise

according to which women managed to gain employments in the Austrian capital city as interpreters on the law courts.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from the previously-discussed pieces of news, readers were acquainted with several extraordinary professions which they surely considered as astounding within the rather conservative settings of the contemporary Hungary. Among these writings, the extraordinary news about an English lady who was elected to the mayor of a small town during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has to be definitely mentioned here.<sup>26</sup> In one of his writings, Artúr László ascertained with great pleasure that „a long list could have been prepared about those women, who either for the sake of the sport or for the aim of a scientific research have overcome the dangers of the higher strata of air” as drivers of air balloons or even as gliders.<sup>27</sup>

In connection with the intellectual professions of Hungarian females, *The Woman and the Society* launched only 14 short pieces of news during the seven years of its publication. These reported primarily on the working progress of female teachers, doctors or scholars i.e. Izabella Győri who „had been elected to the interne of the national ophthalmological institute.”<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, as a result of the exertions of the Feminists' Association, women were nominated among the members of the school committees as well.<sup>29</sup> In another issue of the paper, readers were informed about the fact that „Laura Kovács gained the doctorate at the University of Budapest on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, thus she became the first female doctor of chemistry in our country.”<sup>30</sup> From the field of artistic professions, the readership was able to get to know the most important stages of the career of Böske Kardos – a young graphic artist and poster designer. She had been regarded „as an exceptional representative of decorative arts.”<sup>31</sup> Articles related to the situation of Hungarian women contained negative declarations most of the time, having been complained among others about the efforts of males in order to preventing the activity (and the possible domination) of the „weaker gender” in the previously-mentioned wage-earning activities.<sup>32</sup>

The *New Woman's Life* – similarly to Hungarian journal – published numerous articles (altogether 125) with relation to this subject-matter.<sup>33</sup> However, on the pages of the Vienna paper, the Austrian women's intellectual, scientific and artistic professions gained much more attention than in the paper of Róza Bédy-

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the female clerks of Vienna”, while the Hungarian clerks probably remain unskilled. NT (1907): 9. 154.

<sup>25</sup> WS (1910): 2. 27.

<sup>26</sup> WS (1908): 11. 181.

<sup>27</sup> WS (1910): 5. 72-73.

<sup>28</sup> WS (1907): 9. 154.

<sup>29</sup> WS (1910): 2. 25.

<sup>30</sup> WS (1910): 2. 25.

<sup>31</sup> WS (1910): 7. 122.

<sup>32</sup> As I have already touched upon this subject, it could be read several times that the job application of women teachers had been systematically refused in certain schools. WS (1912): 7. 82.; WS (1909): 1. 11-12.; WS (1910): 2. 20.

<sup>33</sup> It comprises altogether 51, 22% of the analysed writings, which is about 6% higher than the same ratio in *The Woman and the Society*.



Schwimmer. Altogether 42 articles reported on women in different intellectual professions, while other 83 articles appeared about these kinds of activities of women living either within the boundaries of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy or in foreign countries. Articles, sharing some astonishing news about female labourers, cannot be found in a high number in the issues of the paper as only five writings covered certain extraordinary intellectual activities of women.

It is not surprising that both periodicals reported on the positive alternations in terms of the political rights of Finnish women. The editors welcomed the news with great enthusiasm that from 1907 female delegates got the opportunity to participate in the juridical work in the Finnish parliament.<sup>34</sup> In addition to this, „in High-Wycomb, which is a small city of Buckinghamshire, a lady, Mrs Dove had been elected to become the mayor of the settlement”.<sup>35</sup> The fact, that this unique case was simultaneously promulgated by the Hungarian paper, has reinforced my presupposition according to which several overlaps can be found between the subject offers of the two journals. Naturally, smaller divergences can be discovered connected to the presentation of the events: in this particular case, the lady had been a widow according to the *New Woman's Life*, while *The Woman and the Society* regarded her as a single lady.<sup>36</sup>

From the news section of the Austrian journal, the readership was able to gain detailed information about the nomination of Selma Lagerlöf to an honorary doctor<sup>37</sup> as well as about the good news that „the first female electrical engineer obtained her degree after studying for three and a half years in the Institute of Polytechnic in Berlin.”<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, a 1908 article – from which the readership got to know that the legal faculties of the Finnish universities finally opened their doors in front of female students – show the backlog of the Austro-Hungarian educational system behind the Eastern and Western European countries.<sup>39</sup>

Presumably, the personality of Auguste Fickert – who had been a trained schoolteacher – played a central role in the phenomenon that the *New Woman's Life* shared rather much information about the situation and about the problems of Austrian female teachers. From the series of petitions, which were handed over to the government and written by the members of the General Austrian Women's Association, the journal published the most important ones. One of these petitions

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<sup>34</sup> NWL (1907): 5.

<sup>35</sup> NWL (1908): 11. 287.

<sup>36</sup> WS (1908): 11. 181.

<sup>37</sup> NWL (1908): 6. 12.

<sup>38</sup> NWL (1910): 2. 57.

<sup>39</sup> NWL (1908): 6. 164. According to the reflection of the editors, this progress seemed to be possible to reach in Austria as well. However, the innovation had only been introduced in a decade. The Law Faculty of the University of Vienna became opened only after the end of the First World War in front of the female students. Before this regulation, in 9<sup>th</sup> of December, 1917 a legal academy had opened for women, where they were able to enrol for evening courses. The students gained a certificate about their economic and legal knowledge after two-years-courses. BADER-ZAAR, Brigitta: *Die Wiener Frauenbewegung und das Rechtsschutz für Frauen*. IN: ANGERER, Thomas: *Geschichte und Recht. Festschrift für Gerald Stourzh zum 70. Geburtstag*. Böhlau, Wien, 1999. 365-383.

had been written in the year of 1908 with which the aim of Auguste Fickert was to insure the opportunity for women teachers to instruct modern languages in the secondary schools.<sup>40</sup> It had been announced also in the Vienna paper that Mathilda Hübner – teacher in a middle-class girls' school and member of the General Austrian Women's Association – became a guest student at the Technical College.<sup>41</sup> Naturally, the death of Fickert in 1910 did not lead to a drastic change in this policy of the periodical: readers of the *New Woman's Life* had been informed e.g. in 1911 about the news that 16 female members were elected to work in a special council that aimed to improve the institutional frames of girls' education.<sup>42</sup> In the December issue of the next volume, the paper reported on another petition which had been sent by the association to the educational minister and asked him to allow the marriage of women teachers.<sup>43</sup>

The judgement of Hungary in the column of the *New Woman's Life* cannot be regarded as unambiguously positive. The possible reason for the extremely high infant and child mortality according to the journalist Elsa Grailich might have been the disinterestedness and negligence of doctors and midwives: „namely, they (midwives) fail give instruction to mothers how they should feed their babies (...), about the rule that it is forbidden to give the children spirits with sugar, poppy-seeds as well as white or brown slices of bread in order to substitute dummies. These failures might lead to serious gastric diseases and problems related to the digestion.”<sup>44</sup>

Extraordinary professions were discussed in the review section of the Vienna paper as well. In these articles, up-to-date news had been shared about the activities of women who opted for occupations regarded by the contemporary public opinion as unfeminine. According to a short piece of news, which appeared without title, English and American female astronomers – „undertook a large role in the naming process of certain stars”.<sup>45</sup> Readers could gain information in the same issue about the medical qualification of the Belgian king's wife. Elisabeth,

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<sup>40</sup> NWL (1908): 6. 162.

<sup>41</sup> NWL (1909): 1. 16.

<sup>42</sup> NWL (1911): 2. 35-44.

<sup>43</sup> The association referred to the example of the Swiss female teachers. (NWL (1912): 10. 265.) This can be compared with the French circumstances, where marriage of women teachers was encouraged even by state authorities. The reason for this proved to be rather simple and logical to understand: state legislations hoped if female teachers eventually got married, they would not move away from the smallest settlements of France and the villages would not remain without skilled teaching stuff. FRADER, Laura: *Doing Capitalism's Work: Women in the Western European Industrial Economy*. IN: BRIDENTHAL, Renate: *Women in European History*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston. 1998. 295-325.

<sup>44</sup> NWL (1911): 10. 264-271.

<sup>45</sup> The editor of the news section mentioned Paton Fleming, Mary Somerville and Dorothea Klumpke who had been raised in Germany. (NWL (1912): 10. 265.) Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we only sometimes meet female scholars from the field of natural sciences. However, Claire Jones in her study defines the last decades of the 1800s as „laboratory revolution”, referring to the crucial fact that the profession of scholars gradually opened in front of the members of the „weaker gender.” JONES, Claire: *The Laboratory: A Suitable Place for a Woman? Gender and Laboratory Culture Around 1900*. IN: COWMAN, Krista-Jackson, Louise A. (Eds.): *Women and Work Culture. Britain c. 1850–1950*. Ashgate, London, 2005.177-194.

after she had obtained her degree, opened a hospital in Brussels. The first female diplomat of the world Clothilde Louise was employed during these years in the Belgian capital as well, representing the interests of Uruguay in Europe.<sup>46</sup>

Articles, which can be grouped in this subject-category, belong to the genres of news (sometimes with and sometimes without titles). In case of the news, which appeared with titles, it can be observed that editors – as opposed to the eye-catching titles of today's journals – highlighted the most important momentum of the event they covered. A typical example for this might be the following title: „*Women as the university teachers of chemistry.*”<sup>47</sup> Typically, they had been made up of only a short factual paragraph, without the commentary of the journalist.<sup>48</sup>

Among these declarations and statements, three distinct categories can be separated: in the first cluster, editors reported on innovations such as women employed in certain types of professions – such as in case of the article about the Finnish female parliamentary representative.<sup>49</sup> News belonging to the second group shared information about the working success and about the progress of women in certain professions i.e. female lawyers.<sup>50</sup> Articles of the third category, editors shared news about prestigious awards which had been handed over to women artists or scientists.<sup>51</sup> In case of *The Woman and the Society* it is also imaginable that the majority of these articles were simply the borrowings of English or German writings which had appeared in the foreign periodicals the association subscribed to.<sup>52</sup>

### ***Industrial, Agricultural and Service Sectors, Female Clerks, Exploitation of Women Labourers***

As a direct result of the industrial development – emerging at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – traditional forms of women's wage-earning activities gradually became less important. Modern large-scale industry demanded the participation

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<sup>46</sup> NWL (1910): 2.; NWL (1910): 1. 18.

<sup>47</sup> WS (1911): 2. 26.

<sup>48</sup> Exception to this regularity, the glosses of *The Woman and the Society* made constant efforts to emphasize the large difference between the working conditions of Hungarian and foreign female labourers.

<sup>49</sup> WS (1907): 5. 83. The editor listed the names of the newly-elected women in the article. NWL (1910): 2. 59.

<sup>50</sup> WS (1908): 11. 181.: „*In Paris, there are eight women who has a legal praxis, which means that their number had been doubled since the year 1907.*”

<sup>51</sup> WS (1911): 10. 186.: the prize of the French Academy had been awarded to the sculpture „*Hauvelmanns Lucienne*”. It is important to mention that editors of both periodicals tended to translate the names of foreign ladies either into German or into Hungarian.

<sup>52</sup> This presupposition is also reinforced by the fact that at the end of certain articles editors tend to indicate the monogram of the translator. The article of Adelheid Welczek about the female lawyers was translated by „P. P.”, member of the Feminists' Association. (WS (1909): 8. 129-130.) As translator of the writing of Hans Dorn – professor at the University of Munich – the editors indicated „G.”, which might have referred either to Janka Grossman or Janka Gergely. (WS (1909): 1. 4-6.) „P. P.”, which surely referred to Paula Pogány, was the translator of the articles of several foreign authors. (WS (1907): 2. 19-22.; WS (1908): 5. 7-77.) A phenomenon like this cannot be observed in the *New Woman's Life*.

of home workers at the beginning, but the majority of those women, who had previously been active in the field of domestic labour, were compelled to find a new paying occupation outside the house.<sup>53</sup> Technical innovations as well as the new machines lead to the cutting up of the manufacturing process into smaller units. Within a short period of time, directors of factories realised that their workshops could become more profitable and economical if they would have leant on the cheap and unskilled female workforce.<sup>54</sup>

It is essential to mention, that industrial revolution caused the slow alternation of the three sectors of the economy, which resulted in the fact that the service sector gained gradually more and more contribution next to the two traditional sectors of the economy. The number of women working in commerce, transport as well as in the health care grew by leaps and bounds. More and more women worked in certain professions in the public administration, or as civil servants and employees of private offices, which effected the feminization of several professions.<sup>55</sup> All these contributed to the phenomenon namely, that in many Western and Central European countries – except for Germany and France – the ratio of female labourers decreased in the agricultural sector.<sup>56</sup>

Naturally, the above outlined process begun in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy only with a large phase delay. In Austria, several rather modern industrial factories had been founded before the 1860s, but in Hungary, large-scale industrialization begun only after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 had been established. As a direct result of this, the number of women working either in factories or in the service sector started to increase from the 1870s, while the more considerable activity of female labourers can only be observed during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>57</sup> Erna Appelt arranges the feminization of the professions in the service sector into three different phases, among which, the first period took place between 1900 and 1914.<sup>58</sup> From this one and a half decade, she highlights the feminization of those occupations which are connected to the civil

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<sup>53</sup> NAGY 2006. 205-206.

<sup>54</sup> HONEYMAN, Katrina: *Sweat and Sweating: Women Workers and Trade-Unionists in the Leeds Clothing Trade*. IN: Mary DAVIES (Ed.): *Class and Gender in the British Labour History: Renewing the Debate (or starting it)?* Merlin Press, London, 2010. 56-57.

<sup>55</sup> APPELT, Erna: „Perfekte Stenotypistin, gebildetes Fräulein aus gutem Haus...“: zur Geschichte der ersten weiblichen Angestellten Wiens. IN: *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Wissenschaft und Kunst*. (1986): 1. 7-8. Compare to: CLARKE, Linda-WALL, Christine: *Skilled versus Qualified Labour – The Exclusion of Women from the Construction Industry*. IN: Mary DAVIES (Ed.): *Class and Gender in the British Labour History: Renewing the Debate (or starting it)?* Merlin Press, London, 2010. 99. Linda Clark pointed out the complete feminization of certain occupations.

<sup>56</sup> In 1907, the ratio of women working in the agricultural sector proved to be 46, 5% in Germany and 37, 6% in France. BAIROCH, Paul: *La population active et sa structure*. Institut de Sociologie de l'Université libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, 1969. 173-175.; 189-191.

<sup>57</sup> HUELLER, Alida-KONRAD, Helmut: *Die Frau in der österreichischen Arbeiterbewegung*. IN: *Die Frau in der Arbeiterbewegung 1900–1939*. Europaverlag, Vienna, 1980. 283-296.; KÉRI (2008): 128.

<sup>58</sup> She considers the First World War to be the third stage, while the third phase encompasses the period of the stabilization policies of the 1920s and the years of the Great Depression. APPELT (1986): 279.

service. She also makes a large emphasis on the fact that the state representation during these years preferred to employ unmarried and childless women.

At the beginning of the 1890s, more and more women found paid occupation in the food-processing and in the printing industry. Female labour became also popular in the manufacturing of tobacco and matches, as well as in the chemical industry and in the building material industry.<sup>59</sup> Similarly to Hungary, these working activities became the most popular among the Austrian female labourers supplemented with the textile and the garment industry.<sup>60</sup> Between the structures of the two countries' female employment, the age of woman workers can also be considered as a common feature as mostly singles and married but childless women were employed in the industrial and in the service sectors.<sup>61</sup>

With regard to the number of articles, the majority of them in *The Woman and the Society* (114) dealt with the situation of female labourers who worked either in the agricultural, industrial or in the service sector. Working conditions of female clerks had also been mentioned several times. Within this number, as many as 65 articles reported on the situation of women working in the public service. The amount of attention paid to the employees of offices is not surprising, as the Hungarian journal had been the official organ of both the Feminists' Association and the National Federation of Female Clerks that naturally placed a great emphasis on this subject-matter. 20 articles reported on certain forms of female labourers' exploitation, while 18 writings focused on the working conditions of women employed in the tertiary sector and 14 were related to the agrarian sector. In addition to this, 13 writings described the often horrible and hopeless life of those women who worked in the inhuman and large factories.<sup>62</sup>

Compared to the articles about the intellectual, academic and artistic professions it can be clearly stated that in this category, Hungary gained much larger attention.<sup>63</sup> Authors of these pieces emphasized the profiting from the workforce of wage-earner women by their bosses. From the very beginning of the

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<sup>59</sup> KONCZ, Katalin: *Nők és férfiak – hiedelmek és tények. (Women and Men – Beliefs and Facts.)* Kossuth, Budapest, 1985. 151. Leading figure of the American labour movement Samuel Gompers reported in one of his book on the miserable working conditions of those 2000 women who had been employed as mortar-carriers in Budapest before the outbreak of the First World War. GOMPERS, Samuel: *The Budapest Hod-Carrier and her Fellow-Laborers*. Budapest, Hungary, August 15, 1909. IN: *Labour in Europe and America*. Harper Brothers, New York, 1909. 92-104.

<sup>60</sup> These branches of industry started to develop rather fast in Hungary during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. HUELLER-KONRAD (1980): 283-284.

<sup>61</sup> MUCSI, Ferenc: *Weibliche Industriearbeit und sozialistische Frauen-Arbeiterbewegung in Ungarn vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*. IN: *Die Frau in der Arbeiterbewegung 1900–1939*. Europaverlag, Wien, 1980. 333-342.

<sup>62</sup> This embraces almost one half – 47, 3% - of the examined articles. Considering the ratio of the articles, which have been grouped into this category, it is almost equivalent with the ratio of those writings which I have discussed in the previous section of the study. However, articles belonging to this subject-cluster are longer, more compact. They can be regarded in many cases as analytical and problem-solving.

<sup>63</sup> 27 writings – one leading article, several feature articles and editorials – discussed the harsh everyday life of Hungarian female workers.

journal's publication, the new salary scale of female employees can be regarded as a reoccurring subject as well. As the earnings of women proved to be considerably lower than the wages of their male colleagues,<sup>64</sup> the National Federation of Female Clerks handed over several petitions to the Department of Commerce in order to find a suitable solution to this problem.<sup>65</sup> Besides discussing the regular physical punishment of the domestic servants, their legal relationship to their masters was mentioned frequently. In connection with this subject-matter, the editor of *The Woman and the Society* shared the following statement of Ignác Darányi who had been the agricultural minister of Hungary: „friendly (repeated) insults and light physical violence had been offensive neither for the members of the family not for the domestic servants.”<sup>66</sup> Related to the paid work of the „weaker gender” in the industrial and in the tertiary sectors, the topic of the swindles with the closing times was popular. In the milling industry, the basic pillar of the Hungarian economy during the Dualistic Era, female labourers often spent more than 13 hours a day in their workplaces, naturally without getting a day-off on Sundays.<sup>67</sup> Closely connected to the subject-matter of female labourers' exploitation, several articles were shared about the sexual harassments which had been „committed on maids and needlewomen”. However, writers of these articles stated that the police reacted to these crimes successfully.<sup>68</sup>

Female workers, who were employed in the chemical industry, had to face probably with the most miserable working conditions.<sup>69</sup> Gyula Freund interpreted the life of female workers in the match factory of Temesvár directly as „barbarous and brutal”, regarding the health damaging effects of the extremely hard factory work as well as the unequal treatment of the principals showing towards those members of the „weaker gender” who had been drudging sometimes 12–13 hours a day in the workshops. Next to Freund, József Stasser also highlighted in his sociography, which was published in 1907, that mills lay primarily on the workforce of rather young girls, as the earnings of them could have been kept even lower than the wages of older women. It is clearly stated in the article of Freund that the employees of the factory „managed to enforce to increase their daily wages (...) between 0, 88 and 1, 20 Crowns only after having been striking for three weeks.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> In case of a factory worker it was only 50–70% of the monthly wage of a male labourer.

<sup>65</sup> One application had been composed by Szidónia Willhelm. She was the secretary of the National Federation of Female Clerks and also filled in the position of committee member in the Feminists' Association. WS (1908): 6. 104-105.

<sup>66</sup> WS (1907): 6. 98-100.; WS (1907): 5. 78.

<sup>67</sup> The author of the article expressed here her expressive opinion: „The Hungarian state is the supplier of the prostitution's victims.” WS (1908): 1. 22.

<sup>68</sup> Once, seven day-labourers had been imprisoned after inveigling away a girl into the Forest of Rákospalota, when she was „attacked and insulted, then wrestled onto the ground, where she had almost become the victim of a criminal attempt.” WS (1911): 6. 92-93.

<sup>69</sup> 19,3% of the employees of the Hungarian chemical industry proved to be women in 1900. MUCSI (1980): 336.

<sup>70</sup> WS (1908): 11. 179-180. Stasser indicated that the daily wage of a female labourer, who had

As a counterpoint of the above mentioned articles, it is also necessary to emphasize the importance of those three pieces of writings which shared positive news about women employed in the field of agriculture and in the service sector. From one article it became clear that the president of the Upper Hungarian Feminists' Association Berta Engel had been elected to the leader of the *Hungarian Medicinal Bath Company*. Besides this, the readership could ascertain about the information according to which those women who worked as window-cleaners in Budapest „while working 15 hours fewer than their provincial colleagues” were able to earn considerably more money.<sup>71</sup> Kázmér Magyar highlighted in one of his feature articles that the activities carried out by women in the Hungarian agriculture should be regarded very important and valuable. From his point of view, „if the work of women would have been predominated over the work of men in a greater degree in this field of economy”, the problems related to the questions of female emancipation would have been solved much easier.<sup>72</sup>

Unlike the objective language use and the neutral style of the short pieces of news belonging to the first subject category, articles that I have ranked in this group seem to be more subjective and emotionally charged. When reading the articles, fury, disappointment and the author's indignation can be perceived.<sup>73</sup> The principal aim of these journalists with sharing poems as well as with enumerating a series of negative characteristic features criticising the oppression of males was to evoke sympathy in their readers towards female labourers.<sup>74</sup>

Articles reporting on the western countries were less detailed and their lengths proved to be also shorter because most of them avoided the exploration of more complex problems. Publicists aligned several acts making efforts to cut down the „double physical burden”, which rested on women's shoulders.<sup>75</sup> Only few articles reflected on the smaller and seemingly not so meaningful problems as the denial of suffrage from the Danish domestic servants and the problems connected to the

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been employed in a tobacco factory in 1907, was only enough to buy either five kilos of bread or to purchase one kilos of pork.

<sup>71</sup> WS (1909): 8. 139.

<sup>72</sup> WS (1907): 6. 100-102.

<sup>73</sup> Titles of these feature articles and glosses showed resemblances with the titles of today's articles. Opposed to titles containing the short summary of the stories' content, these titles proved to be rather attention-catching and sometimes provocative. E.g.: „Some serious labour of the males.” In this article, those men had been mocked who consider the tasks related to the household and to the upbringing of children to be easy. WS (1907): 9. 149.

<sup>74</sup> In a 1911 issue of the journal, Charlotte Gilman Perkins highlighted in a poem the cruelty and fearlessness of a man towards his child: „Only the human father, only the clever and thoughtful self is capable of eating up the product of the work of his child.” WS (1911): 10. 169.

<sup>75</sup> In the more developed regions, the majority of males had already recognized during the 1880s that females cannot be considered inferior to them neither in physical nor in mental terms. However, the Hungarian public opinion still made fun of women with the following accusations before the outbreak of the Great War: „(...) they are superficial, they are not able to identify larger interconnections between certain things. Their minds are undisciplined, their abilities for logical combination are weak, they are inconsequent, they contradict themselves, and they are unstable. They are sentimental beings who are led by blind impulses.” The Woman (1914): 4. 76.

Russian wage-system.<sup>76</sup> Austrian women clerks were also mentioned in the Hungarian paper: according to a statistics altogether 763 women worked in the bank sector in Vienna, while their number in the provinces reached approximately 1000–1200.<sup>77</sup>

The subject-matter gained smaller publicity in the issues of the *New Woman's Life*. Working conditions of women employees of agrarian, industrial and service sector as well as the situation of female clerks and their exploitation appeared in 58 articles.<sup>78</sup> Within this subject-cluster, most writings (24) dealt with the employees of private offices. 15 pieces of news reported on the feminization of certain jobs in the field of the tertiary sector, while altogether ten pieces of articles covered the activities of women carried out in the farming as well as in the large factories. Compared to the Hungarian periodical, the number of articles, which shared detailed information about the profiting from females' workforce, proved to be lower, as their number reached only nine.<sup>79</sup>

Similarly to the Hungarian journal, the *New Woman's Life* shared some mournful articles concerning the problems related to the wages, different types of insurances and pension of female clerks.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, one journalist of the paper discussed once that in the garment manufacturing, leaders of the factories failed to keep the act that regulated the closing times of sweatshops.<sup>81</sup> However, the majority of these writings shared progressive and positive news with the readership. In 1909, it became finally clear that female factory inspectors would be able to hold professions in the garment manufacturing – primarily in the field of the ready-to-wear industry – in the whole territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.<sup>82</sup> Readers were also informed about the fact that both in Austria and in Bohemia several technical schools had opened their doors in which girls can acquire different trades like the crafts of needlewomen, milliners, jewellers or even florists.<sup>83</sup> Austrian public education encouraged girls to master other professions as well. They could work as hairdressers, manufacturers of children's garments and as gold- silver and pearl cutter.<sup>84</sup> As opposed to this large progress,

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<sup>76</sup> WS (1907): 2. 25. The editor of the *Journal de Saint Petersburg* shared the following news about the Russian female clerks: „*Their working conditions are not equal with their male colleagues neither in terms of their qualification nor in term of their payment.*” WS (1907): 2. 27.

<sup>77</sup> WS (1910): 2. 25.

<sup>78</sup> This means the 23,77% of the articles I have studied.

<sup>79</sup> This is less than the half of the number of those writings which appeared in *The Woman and the Society* in connection with this subject-matter.

<sup>80</sup> NWL (1910): 2. 41-44.

<sup>81</sup> NWL (1909): 1. 17.

<sup>82</sup> At the end of the article the editor shared her private opinion about this subject-matter with her readers according to which the number of female employees in this territory seemed to be still rather low. She also noted: „*The editorial board welcomes each and every initiatives like this.*” NWL (1909): 10. 266.

<sup>83</sup> Apart from Vienna, schools like this were established in Graz, Klagenfurt, Prague and Brno as well as in Olomouc. NWL (1909): 9. 17.

<sup>84</sup> NWL (1907): 9. 12-13.



an article which was published in 1910, complained about the sad fact that finding a job for a woman in the artisan occupation proved to be very complicated and difficult in Austria. Although they were entitled to carry on vocational studies, they were only seldom employed as apprentices and this largely made their subsistence difficult.<sup>85</sup>

Among the present articles approximately 50% of the writings touched upon the labour of women living in Austria and in other territories of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In 1909, the journal shared a statistics with an eye-catching lead according to which agriculture was „*indeed an occupation for the members of the weaker gender.*” Exact data had been published about the number of female workers in the Danish agrarian sector: among 724 000 Danish farmers altogether 150 000 women were active in cultivation of plough-lands in 1901. Their ratio was 20,8% and 9% of them proved to be independent farmers.<sup>86</sup> According to another foreign piece of news, waitresses had been employed in Swiss restaurants where the serving up of alcoholic drinks was forbidden.<sup>87</sup>

### ***Labour Organization, Protection of Female Workers and Employment Exchange***

As a direct result of the large-scale appearance of women in the labour market, several problems emerged which were rather complex interlacing the whole society. Generally, the welfare policies of the European countries were able to react to these problems very slowly, and in many cases these troubles were only partially solved. Due to this fact, females' associations – in growing numbers – tried to find the adequate answers and the possible solutions to the evoking questions and problems at the turn of the century. As women – except for few countries<sup>88</sup> – had not been enfranchised, they were fully aware of their only opportunity to raise their voices against the injustice that had been committed against them. Namely, they had to persuade progressively thinking members of the parliament so that they would help them and speak in the parliament for their interests.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> It is worth comparing this writing with the feature article written by Lili Baitz-Meran in a 1908 issue of *The Woman and the Society*: “the majority of vocational and art schools are opened in front of the girls, but they are not allowed to enter to the workshops. Girls are almost anywhere accepted to work as apprentices. Even if they are extremely talented or gifted there is only a small chance for them to learn more from the profession than dilettantism.” WS (1908): 5. 76-77.

<sup>86</sup> NWL (1909): 10. 262-263.

<sup>87</sup> The editor supplemented this article with her commentary: „*Restaurants, which do not serve alcoholic drinks, unfortunately have not yet opened everywhere. They are missing especially from Austria.*” NWL (1910): 2. 58-59.

<sup>88</sup> In New Zealand, women gained the right to vote as early as in 1893, while in Australia, they got the suffrage in 1902. Among the European countries, female suffrage had been announced in Finland in 1902. Norwegian women became electors right before the outbreak of the war, in 1913.

<sup>89</sup> From this, it becomes clear that the feminists of this period were not „*witches or dragons who hated every men*”. The author Rosa Mayreder, member of the General Austrian Women's Association –

Solutions to those problems, which have been previously mentioned in this study, were elaborated by several groups of women in Austria-Hungary gradually from the 1890s. Besides the social democratic and Christian socialist women's associations, the General Austrian Women's Association and the Hungarian Feminists' Association – with a small phase delay from 1904 – made attempts to improve the situation of female workers.<sup>90</sup> Both Hungarian and Austrian feminists realized that the key aspect to the settling of female workers' troubles is their labour organization. Having been overlooked the respecting statistical data, it seems to be obvious, that the trade-unionist activity of women was almost negligible around the whole Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In 1903, only 4,7% of Hungarian women labourers belonged to any labour organizations, while this ratio was 5,5% in Austria. Regarding the statistics on disposition, agitation proved to be more effectual in Austria, as the ratio of organized female workers reached 11,5% in 1911. In Hungary, this same ratio stayed rather low, it was only 5,2%.<sup>91</sup>

The official organs of the two associations also reinforced that arranging female workers into labour organizations was a rather difficult task, as there were several branches especially in the industrial sector, where the level of female workers' organization was very immature. It is not surprising that these are those jobs in which the exploitation of women labourers assumed the greatest measures. In Austria, the ratio of those women who enjoyed the protection of labour organizations reached only 2% in the field of paper industry, 1,3% in the metallurgy, while it was only 0,7% in the occupations related to the chemical industry.<sup>92</sup> With relation to Hungary, the situation might have seemed even more hopeless, as among the 70 000 organized workers only 3014 were members of the „weaker gender”.<sup>93</sup> Among the employees of the printing industry, only 207 women joined to any labour organizations until 1905. In case of the female labourers employed in tobacco factories and in the canning industry, there are not any organising activities that can be ascertained during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>94</sup> This can be explained obviously with the dissimilar level of education of

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held an opinion about this as follows: „It is impossible for me to look at men as they would be the enemies of women's movements (...) I see several men here, who belong to us (to the women's movement) and they are both males and females”. ANDERSON, Harriet: *Utopian Feminism: Women's Movements in the Fin-de-siècle Vienna*. The Bath Press, Avon, 1992. 16.

<sup>90</sup> Seemingly, the movement of the Federation of Christian Women in Vienna was more successful than the General Austrian Women's Association, as the number of their members had already reached almost 15 000 at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. ANDERSON (1992): 39-42.

<sup>91</sup> MUCSI (1980): 340.

<sup>92</sup> APPELT, Erna: *Von Ladenmädchen, Schreibfräulein und Gouvernanten 1900–1934. Angestellten Wiens zwischen 1900 und 1934*. Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, Wien, 1985. 212-216.

<sup>93</sup> This is only 4,3% of the members of labour organizations.

<sup>94</sup> Naturally, the majority of organized female labourers worked in Budapest. MUCSI (1980): 339-340. It is worth eluding here to the situation, which can be observed in Great Britain in connection with this subject-matter. In England as early as in 1906 a females' organization was established – Women's Trade Union League – which intended to unify all women workers regardless to the type of occupation they carried out. HUNT, Cathy: *The Fragility of the Union – The Work of the National Federation of Women Workers in the Regions of Britain*. IN: Mary DAVIES (Ed.): *Class and Gender in the British Labour*

women who worked in the different sectors of the economy: while among the female employers of the printing industry, mastering the reading and writing skills was inevitable, the majority of agricultural labourers as well as the employees of metallurgy were usually semi-skilled workers.

On the bases of the above-mentioned facts, it can be considered as natural, that the editorship of both papers devoted a great amount of attention to the topic concerning the organization of female workers and to the employment exchange. In *The Woman and the Society*, altogether 65 articles praised the organization of not only the English and French but also the German and Austrian women workers'.<sup>95</sup> Hungarian journalists also listed a series of dispositions, which had already been introduced in these countries, and criticized at the same time the Hungarian relations.<sup>96</sup> I find it important to highlight that the problems related to the protection of female workers gained the most emphasized role within this subject-category because more than 50% of the articles (36) dealt with this topic.<sup>97</sup>

Altogether 26 writings called the reader's attention to the foreign countries: among others it turned out that home labour of women had been regulated both in Great Britain and in Austria in a way that the exploitation of those women „*who had been professionally dealing either with confectionary work or with manufacturing of garments and shoes*” could have been prevented.<sup>98</sup> The success of the Northern European women's movements was indicated by one of the articles, in which readers got information about the apartments that had been constructed for female workers. In the comfortable flats, there were not only kitchens and bathrooms but spacious gardens, too. The apartments were waiting for their future residents with „*so called kitchenettes, which had been equipped for preparing light lunches in them.*”<sup>99</sup> Readers of *The Woman and the Society* received the news probably refused to believe the news reporting on the German women's intention to found a bank for only female clients. The institution was successfully established to the initiative of the lawyer Marie Raschke in order to „*promote women's ambitions made for their financial independence.*”<sup>100</sup> Working conditions of female teachers educating in the Western European countries also presented in a positive exposition: in a 1908 issue of the paper, the editor informed the readership about the end of the German teachers' marriage

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*History: Renewing the Debate (or Starting it)?* Merlin Press, London, 2010. 171.) This also shows explicitly the advantage of the Western European women's movements.

<sup>95</sup> In case of the Hungarian women's movements the following of the German examples can be observed, meaning that both in terms of their structures and their activities the national females' associations adapted several characteristic features of similar German groups.

<sup>96</sup> Almost the third of the examined articles, more precisely 26,98% of them.

<sup>97</sup> 55,3% of the writings were placed in this cluster.

<sup>98</sup> Workers were provided with trade licences, and both their working hours and their wages were regulated. WS (1907): 6. 104-105.

<sup>99</sup> Flats were equipped with central heating, and their price was about 200–250 Swedish Crowns. The editor did not miss to share with the inquirers that the Swedish state – with regard to the large demand – planned the construction of new blocks of flats. WS (1909): 4. 61.

<sup>100</sup> The name of the institution was: Bank Federation of Independent Women. WS (1910): 5. 76.

prohibition.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, an article covered that Swiss female teachers had agreed that under the minimum wage of 1600 Franks – which had been fixed by their association – every job offer should have been refused.<sup>102</sup>

The Hungarian periodical wrote with appreciative tone about the labour organisation of Austrian women: „*In the year 1910, their organisation proved to be more successful than the activity completed by their male counterparts, since the number of organised workers decreased from 375 520 to 357 928. Despite of this fact, members belonging to any female labourers' organisations increased from 39 736 to 42 607; this situation indicates us that the enthusiastic agitation of Austrian leaders was able to make a progress even in a disadvantageous period like this is.*”<sup>103</sup>

The working conditions of Austrian and foreign organized women workers were compared and contrasted with the situation of those Hungarians who did not enjoy the protection of any labour organizations. The periodical of Róza Bedy Schwimmer was very often preoccupied with the following subject-matters: revision of salaries and health-care insurance of female employees, with the ban of Sunday and night shifts in case of both women and men labourers as well as with the protection of mothers and their infants. In 1911, when the legal regulation of women's nightshifts seemed to be within a reachable distance in Hungary, Bedy Schwimmer and Miklós Gerster devoted analytical leading articles and feature stories to the reception and possible positive (or negative) effects of the act.<sup>104</sup> The feature article of Sándor Grotein showed an extremely progressive way of thinking, in which the author came to the conclusion, according to which abortion should not be regarded as a punishable action. As he firmly stated, it was the only possible solution in order to prevent unwanted pregnancies.<sup>105</sup> Besides this, suggestions for the establishment of the institutional frames of retirement plans and for the rolling back of prostitution and white-slavery were discussed.

Wage-earning women had been vehemently encouraged by the editors of both papers to „*join (only for their own interests) to the labour organization of their job*”.<sup>106</sup> With regard to the statistical data, the agitation of Hungarian feminists proved to be less successful than that of the Austrian fellow associations. Between 1894 and 1911, the ratio of those women workers who had memberships in any

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<sup>101</sup> The text of the news was the following: „*Married teachers have not been tolerated in this profession so far. Now, they are modifying on this injustice. Prussian female teachers have temporarily gained the possibility to get marry.*” WS (1908): 1. 11.

<sup>102</sup> WS (1907): 9. 156.

<sup>103</sup> WS (1911): 10. 168.

<sup>104</sup> Gerster highlighted the prospective closure of brothels. (WS (1911): 3. 42-44.) Andor Máday pushed the prohibition (or restriction) of male labourers' nightshifts. WS (1913): 3. 44.

<sup>105</sup> At the lead paragraph of his article he raised the following question: „*Whether the birth of an infant, which is the direct result of the sexual intercourse between a lunatic girl and his brutal father is a desirable thing?*” WS (1911): 6. 94-96.

<sup>106</sup> This notice could be found in almost every issue of the journal right after the beginning of its publication. It seems to be as if members of the Association would have thought that with the constant repetition of these phrases women can be persuaded to act. WS (1907): 2. 32.

labour organizations increased only in a small degree – from 2% to 5,2%. During this period, the same ratio of organized female employees almost tripled from 4,5% to 11,5%.<sup>107</sup>

The question may arise at this point: why did the majority of women workers not find it important to organize?<sup>108</sup> From Alice Kessler-Harris's point of view, their lack of organization in the western countries might dates back to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when male employee tried to expel women workers from almost every labour organization. Subsequently, the ratio of females in these groups remained extremely low not only in Central Europe but also in the more developed regions of the continent and even in the United States of America.<sup>109</sup> In addition to this, Carole Turbin emphasize that the structural change of economy had a large impact on the functional alternation of families, but married wage-earning women still had to fulfil their duties connected to the housekeeping and to the child-rearing. This way, they did not have enough time to organize themselves. Organization activity proved to be more popular among younger girls and among single or widow working women.<sup>110</sup>

Editors of the *New Woman's Life* devoted an even more important role to the topic of the organization of women workers than the Hungarian journal did, as the subject-matter of altogether 128 articles touched upon partially or fully the issue.<sup>111</sup> Within this, the biggest attention was paid to the protection of women workers, as 65 articles provided possible solutions to their problems. It is also crucial to mention that the ratio between the articles published about Austria and about foreign countries seems to be more balanced than in case of the Hungarian journal: 66 writings reported on Austrian females, and 62 about those who lived outside the boundaries of the country.

The Austrian periodical covered the subject-matter of a housing program as well. However, this project was not related to a foreign country but to the activity of the General Austrian Women's Association. The association planned the construction of several blocks of flats which were able to meet the requirements

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<sup>107</sup> MUCSI (1980): 340.

<sup>108</sup> Theresa Wolfson, American economist, posed this question as follows: „Where are the organized women workers?” WOLFSON, Theresa: *Where are the Organized Women Workers?* American Federationist. (1925): June. 445-453.

<sup>109</sup> The ratio of women possessing memberships in any labour organization proved to be only 6, 6% in 1920. This indicates that every fifth men and only every fifteenth women enjoyed the protection of an organization group. KESSLER-HARRIS, Alice: *Gendering Labour History*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 2007. 21-36. As opposed to this, Jenkins-Cook highlights that women belonging to the working-class were rather active in the labour organizations and many of them joined to women's associations. JENKINS-COOK, Sylvia: *Working Women, Literary Ladies – The Industrial Revolution and Female Aspiration*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008. 225.

<sup>110</sup> Turbin clarifies that family has an essential role when the activity of women within the frames of labour organizations is examined. In her study, she calls the attention of the reader to the fact which have already ascertained by several sociologists, namely that women have been unable to cooperate for a longer period of time with each other in small groups. TURBIN (1992): 167-178.

<sup>111</sup> This subject appeared in 52,5% of the analysed writings.

of middle-class single working ladies.<sup>112</sup> The financial support, which was inevitable to the realisation of the project, had been collected from the incomes of an evening party.<sup>113</sup> With relation to Austria, we can also read articles about the suggestion in order to expand old-age pension and health-care insurance to those labourers who worked either in their homes or in the agricultural sector.<sup>114</sup> Naturally, several articles appeared about the legal acts regulating the closing times of workshops which had been accepted by the Upper House of the Parliament and which came into force from 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1911.<sup>115</sup> While Róza Bády Schwimmer reported on the miserable situation of chorus girls, the Vienna periodical covered the “actress issue” and the organization of the employees of theatres. According to the editors, “the financial situation of actresses proved to be very sad, as their wages moved between 100 and 300 Crowns in a month. Besides this, they stayed without income for six months after the actual season had been finished.”<sup>116</sup>

Similarly to the Hungarian journal, problems related to pregnancy and motherhood were discussed here as well. This is the issue in which the advantage of steps of the Northern European females’ association could have been discovered. While the report on a petition, which had been written by the social democratic women demanding for a four-week maternity leave after the birth of the child, it became clear from another short piece of news that Finnish women were provided with a significant financial support after they had given birth to their infant babies.<sup>117</sup>

About the Western European countries, the *New Woman's Life* shared – almost without exception – positive news such as the Hungarian paper did. Among others, it shared an article about the enviable working-conditions of French female labourers who were legally entitled for free Saturday afternoons after they had got married.<sup>118</sup> A remarkably interesting and thought-provoking article was published in a 1909 issue of the periodical about the brand new aim of German women’s associations: after the introduction of the ten-hour working day, they intended to

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<sup>112</sup> This idea of the Association was not unique. During these decades, several Hungarian women’s association tried to create home for single female clerks. Associations related to the Church – among others the *Zsuzsanna Lórántffy Association* – aimed to support working women in need. Furthermore, several groups dealt with labour exchange and with the problems related to domestic servants. GÉRA, Eleonóra: *Református karitatív intézmények a magyar fővárosban 1850–1952. (Calvinist philanthropic institutions in the Hungarian capital 1850–1952.)* PhD Dissertation. Budapest, 2006. 166-167.

<sup>113</sup> NWL (1908): 15-16. The project was named after the well-known Austrian painter Tina Blau. She was asked by Auguste Fickert to design the interiors of the flats.

<sup>114</sup> NWL (1908): 5. 133-134.; NWL (1908): 6. 162.

<sup>115</sup> Commentary of the author indicates that the introduction of this legal act had been preceded by lengthy debates. NWL (1911): 9. 69.

<sup>116</sup> NWL (1911): 6. 156-159.

<sup>117</sup> They got money for 14 weeks, for six weeks before childbirth and for 8 weeks after the birth of the babies. NWL (1909): 1. 20.

<sup>118</sup> The same act determined the length of the working week in 50 hours and it maximized the daily working hours in both in cases of adolescents and women in eight and a half hours. NWL (1911): 11. 276.

get the rights of married women acknowledged for the five-hours working day. The long-term aim of these association was „*to reach the ideal according to which the wages of men will increase in a greater measure, which will make it possible for them to support their families (as only wage-earners), indicating that women will not have to continue any wage-earning activities.*”<sup>119</sup>

We have to see that the two associations who stood behind these two journals wanted to improve the situation of female workers in the everyday life as well. After it had been proved that the act introduced about the closing times of workshops could be easily deluded, editors encouraged their readers „*to announce every abuses considering the closing times*” to the members of the Feminists’ Association.<sup>120</sup> Apart from this, the Hungarian periodical published countless notices and advertisement about the outcomes of the presentations and debates held by the Feminists’ Association and the National Federation of Female Clerks in the provincial towns.<sup>121</sup> Within the General Austrian Women’s Association, a legal advice service operated from 1895, where women were able to turn to with their social, marriage or business problems.<sup>122</sup>

Regarding the style and tone of these articles, they were often sarcastic and full of criticism. However, having been overlooked on these writings, it can be unambiguously stated that the primary aim of the journalists was far from scolding their male counterparts but to solve the problems of female labourers as well as to achieve their economic equality.

### **Conclusion**

Though the written press went through several changes during its evolution, the persuasion of the readership have played a central role since the beginnings. The importance of the formation of opinion is especially perceptible in case of the two feminist journals I have analysed in this study. On the one hand, editors of the two periodicals – as most of them were active members of Hungarian and Austrian liberal bourgeois female associations – wanted to convince the conservative society of the necessity of the complete emancipation of the „*weaker gender*”. On the other hand, they intended to awake the consciousness of women and encourage them to act, by liberating them not only from their centuries-old

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<sup>119</sup> NWL (1909): 10. 250-253.

<sup>120</sup> The piece of article is supplemented with the following specification: „*the denunciation at the competent authority will be arranged by us, naturally without the naming of the source.*” WS (1913): 9. 157.

<sup>121</sup> The aim of these events was also the advancement of working women’s situation. For the success of the presentation held by Róza Bédy Schwimmer in Pécs see: WS (1907): 2. 25.

<sup>122</sup> This kind of assistance was free of charge. On the bases of the statistical data, the organization became more and more popular. In 1907, altogether 1160 legal cases were solved – out of 1644 – by the members of the association. Among the clients, each layer of the society could have been found: factory labourers, home workers, maids, needlewomen, waitresses, teachers and female clerks as well as artists and authors. BADER-ZAAR (1999): 367-375.

subordination but also from the identity crisis they suffered in.

The novelty of my research was given by the methodology, namely that I intended to study the history of female labour at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the tools of news analysis and discourse analysis. My primary aim was to seek answer to the following question: what was the picture like that was mediated by the two papers about the wage-earning activity of Austro-Hungarian and foreign women before the outbreak of the First World War? To gain the adequate answers to my questions, I analysed the Budapest and the Vienna journals from several perspectives with the help of those viewpoints which had been previously worked out by me.

To the analysis of the articles' content and the linguistic usage of the journalists, I applied the analogies that can be observed among the subject-matter of certain writings: I composed 12 groups from the key words which are considered to the gist of the texts in the journalistic practice. These expressly showed that the appearance of women in the labour market went along with important consequences, and lead to fundamental alternations both in the micro- and macro levels of society. Besides the western women, Austro-Hungarian females also gained the opportunity to continue university studies and chose intellectual, academic or artistic professions towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The second wave of the industrial revolution as well as the economic development of the Dualistic Era caused that the ratio of working women increased intensively in the industrial and in the service sectors. This period can also be regarded as the beginning of welfare policy. Due to the activities of the Austro-Hungarian feminist movement, night work of women was banned and the foundations of mother- and infant protection were laid down.

Besides the key words, I also paid attention to the recurring stylistic elements, fixed expressions as well as to the language use of the journalists. From this analysis, it became clear that the aim of the authors was not the scolding of males but to find constructive solutions for female labourers' troubles.

These tendencies caused that women's awakening to consciousness was advanced by the outbreak of the Great War. It can be observed especially in the two capital cities of the Monarchy that more and more women had their own earnings and enjoyed the protection of certain labour organizations. In spite of these clear facts, we have to admit that the exploitation of women continued and even intensified after 1914. Both Hungarian and Austrian associations made efforts to prevent this, by taking an important role in the organization of female workforce and in the guiding of the countries' war economics.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> SZAPOR, Judit: *Who Represents Hungarian Women? The Liberal Bourgeois Women's Right Movement and the Rise of Right-Wing Women's Movement in the Aftermaths of the War*. IN: SPARP, Ingrid-STIBBE, Matthew (Eds.): *Aftermaths of War. Women's Movements and Female Activists. 1918–1923*. Brill, Leiden 2011. 245-309. Judit Acsády highlights that the interest and activity of the feminists turned towards the handling of problems related to the war. ACSÁDY, Judit: *Diverse Constructions: Feminist and Conservative Women's Movements and their Contribution of Gender-Relations in Hungary after the First World War*. IN: SHARP, Ingrid-STIBBE, Matthew (Eds.): *Aftermaths of War. Women's*



In the course of the further examination of this subject-matter, the analysis of every issue of *The Woman and the Society* and the *New Woman's Life* will surely bring important results. Furthermore, it would be worth studying the picture mediated by German, French and English feminist periodicals about the working conditions of Austro-Hungarian female labourers. With this research work, not only the contextualization of the topic would be possible but the interpretation of the Western European press about the Austrian and Hungarian women would also be crystallized.

